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For immediate release

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Get Ready: Set Your Clocks, Check Your Stocks

This fall when you set your clocks back for daylight savings time, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) suggests using it as a reminder to check your preparedness kit to make sure your emergency stockpile isn't missing any items and that the food hasn't expired. It is also a great time to check the batteries in your smoke alarms.



There are many items you should have in your emergency preparedness stockpile. If you don't have time, room, or money to get them all, consider which items are the most essential for your family's needs. Here are a few top picks:

1. Three-day supply of water, with one gallon of water per person per day

After an emergency such as a tornado, flood or earthquake, the water that comes out of your tap might not be safe to drink — if it's running at all. And don't forget to include water for your pets!

2. Three-day supply of nonperishable food

Choose foods that don't require refrigeration or special preparation and aren't high in salt. Look for canned fruit packed in juice, not syrup.

3. Manual can opener

Don't forget to include a manual can opener in your stockpile to open all your canned food items easily and safely.

4. First-aid kit

Injuries can happen during disasters. Have a basic first-aid kit with items such as sterile gloves, gauze, soap, burn ointment, bandages in a variety of sizes, pain relievers, scissors, and tweezers.

5. Radio

A radio is essential to receive emergency information. Any hand-cranked or battery-operated radio can provide important information on weather or evacuation alerts.

6. Flashlights and lanterns

When the power's out, it can be dangerous to walk around. Keep flashlights and battery-operated lanterns in your stockpile so you can stay safe and lit.

7. Batteries

Batteries are essential during a disaster. It can be hard to locate batteries when the power is out, so keeping them in your disaster stash makes sense.

8. Whistle

It can be helpful to keep a whistle on a keychain or lanyard to signal for help if needed. Three blasts from a whistle is an internationally recognized distress signal.

9. Prescription medications

If you regularly use prescription medications, it's key that you have access to them in an emergency. Talk to your doctor or health care provider about getting an extra supply to keep in your stockpile.

10. Battery-operated or solar cellphone charger

Cellphones can be essential for communicating with your family, emergency responders and local authorities. A battery-operated or solar cellphone charge can ensure you will have access to a charged phone, even when the power is out.

“Changing your clocks due to daylight savings time happens twice a year, so it is a great way to remember to check those items that we may rely on when a disaster strikes but don't think about as we go about our daily lives,” states Kay Schmidt, Emergency Response Coordinator for SWNPHD. “We have resources available if you are wanting to expand your disaster stockpile and would like to reference any of the items suggested.”

Please reach out to Kay at 308-345-4223 for further assistance in helping to plan your preparedness kits. More information on how to prepare an emergency kit can be found at [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov). You can also get informed by downloading the FEMA app for disaster resources, weather alerts, and safety tips.

Southwest Nebraska Public Health serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. Visit [swhealth.ne.gov](https://www.swhealth.ne.gov) for information on preparedness. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. SWNPHD is located at 404 West 10th St (1 block north of Arby's) in McCook and can be reached by calling 308-345-4223.

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